

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 15, 2009

The City Council Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 5:35 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 15th day of October, 2009, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilmembers Butler, Cubberley, Kovach,
Chairman Quinn

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Cindy Rosenthal
Mr. Nate Ellis, Bond Counsel, Public Finance Law
Group, P.L.L.C.
Mr. Anthony Francisco, Finance Director
Ms. Brenda Hall, City Clerk
Mr. Greg Hall, Street Maintenance Superintendent
Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager
Mr. Angelo Lombardo, Traffic Engineer
Mr. Blaine Nice, Assistant City Attorney
Ms. Janice Oak, Progressive Independence
Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works
Mr. Cody Ponder, Grants Specialist II for OU
Mr. Wayne Wickman, OU Transit Operations
Manager
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV
Ms. Ann Beavers, Driver for CART
Mr. Roger Gallagher, interested citizen
Mr. Andrew Knittle, The Norman Transcript
Dr. Kyran Mish, Bicycle Advisory Committee Chair

DISCUSSION REGARDING REVISIONS TO THE CLEVELAND AREA RAPID TRANSIT (CART) RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE.

Members reviewed the reports and Councilmember Butler asked whether CART Staff had observed a specific time of day the Little Axe Route had the most riders. Mr. Cody Ponder, Grants Specialist II for OU, said a commuter pattern has not been established, but they would continue to monitor the route. He said overall ridership is down about 2% from last year, but felt it was still good since last year CART experienced their highest ridership ever. He said CARTaccess is still down slightly and they have not been able to pinpoint the reason; however, in Zone 2, Service Outside CARTaccess Primary Fixed Routes, ridership decreases could be attributed to cost since Zone 2 service costs \$5.00 per round trip while the primary fixed route service cost is \$2.00.

Chairman Quinn said the Committee received correspondence requesting bus service to the Cleveland County YMCA Facility on Lexington Street and asked for input from CART Staff. Mr. Wayne Wickman, Transit Operations Manager, said the streets in North Base are owned and maintained by OU and CART ran service to the YMCA several years ago, but when OU resurfaced Lexington Street, the administrator of Westheimer Airport said the asphalt was too thin and did not want the heavy buses driving on the street. He said CART was told to remove that bus stop and they did; however, CART Staff will contact the administrator and discuss the possibility of reinstituting that bus stop.

Chairman Quinn said he toured the new Northwest Norman Regional Medical Facility and administrators were excited about the prospect of a bus stop located at their facility, not only for their patients, but employees as well. Mr. Wickman said CART talked with hospital administrators about a bus stop in front of the facility and are working on the actual location. Mr. Ponder said Mr. Kris Glenn, Marketing Assistant for OU, will be organizing several workshops to educate employees on navigating the bus system. He said CART is also planning to place informational kiosks in the medical facility building and Sooner Mall.

Chairman Quinn said Mr. Roger Gallagher, a Norman resident, spoke at the City Council meeting on October 13, 2009, about bus stops in his area and he asked Mr. Gallagher to share his concerns with CART Staff. Mr. Gallagher said two bus stops were changed near his neighborhood, without notification and CART had abandoned ADA (American with Disabilities Act) accessible stops for stops that are not ADA accessible. He feels the new stops are dangerous for riders, as well as drivers, because riders must stand in a grassy area near a busy street waiting for the bus. He said this is a huge safety issue and CART should not have changed bus stop locations without first making sure the new stops were ADA accessible. Mr. Wickman said CART is in the process of making those stops accessible. He said it has been a long time since CART made route changes the process of choosing a location is now more detailed and ADA regulations are different as well. He said CART is very aware of the problems and are working as quickly as possible to get them addressed. Chairman Quinn asked if bus shelters are paid for by CART or the advertisers and Mr. Ponder said the advertiser pays for the shelter and all ADA improvements for that shelter. Councilmember Kovach understood CART is preparing to change several routes and asked if they had a better system in place for notifying citizens in advance of changes. Mr. Ponder said there is a formal process now in place.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Total Weekday Passenger Trips; Average Daily Passenger Trips; CARTaccess; Same Day and Zone Two; Bicycle and Saturday Totals; Total Saturday Passenger Trips; Average Saturday Passenger Trips; Expanded Sooner Express; Social Security Administration; and Little Axe Shuttle
2. E-mail dated October 2, 2009, from Heather Cook to Ward2@normanok.gov

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF REQUESTING THE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS (ACOG) TO FACILITATE A COMMUTER RAIL STUDY FOR THE NORMAN TO OKLAHOMA CITY AND OKLAHOMA CITY TO EDMOND SEGMENTS.

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, to invest in transportation infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits and assist those most affected by the current economic downturn. Discretionary grant funds to be awarded by the Department of Transportation (ODOT) for capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure are being referred to as "Grants for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery" or the "TIGER Discretionary Grant Program."

Mayor Cindy Rosenthal said she attended an ODOT meeting where Mr. Gary Ridley, Executive Director, spoke about ODOT's application for high speed rail service. She said the application includes double tracking the Norman to Oklahoma City Corridor. She said there is a lot of competition for the funds but Mr. Ridley was very optimistic there are attributes to the proposal that make a strong case for the Norman to Oklahoma City (OKC) line as well as the Tulsa to OKC line. She said selected projects must be shovel ready and finished in six years and it is a benefit that engineering studies have already been done for the Tulsa to Oklahoma City portion. She said for the Norman to OKC portion, double tracking is all within the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) right-of-way and BNSF has written in support of the high speed rail and is on board to help with the process. Another helpful feature is that ODOT applied with exempt status, which means that since there is existing BNSF right-of-way, the project will not have go through alternatives analysis and environmental assessments. She said ODOT should know in three to four months whether or not these projects are being considered.

Mayor Rosenthal said ACOG is involved in the Regional Transit Dialogue and expects to play a significant role in an Intermodal Hub Study in OKC and while they feel it will be important to conduct a Commuter Rail Study, it is not possible to do so this year. Mayor Rosenthal suggested waiting until January before adopting a resolution to that effect. Chairman Quinn asked if the timing is bad to adopt a resolution now. Mayor Rosenthal said she would like to see how the TIGER grant plays out first and felt it would be better to adopt a resolution supporting the high speed rail application. Councilmember Kovach said he would support a resolution for the high speed rail application; however, a resolution supporting a commuter rail study would not be mute if the high speed rail application is accepted because an environmental analysis would still be needed for the stops along the way that are outside of the BNSF right-of-way. He said the commuter rail resolution is flexible and by starting now, ACOG will know what kind of support they have. Councilmember Butler said she would like to separate the two projects and do something to focus on the high speed rail project and then refine the commuter rail study resolution for later distribution. Councilmember Cubberley agreed and said, in January, if no movement has happened regarding the high speed rail application, Council could consider a commuter rail study resolution incorporating language about the high speed rail application. Councilmembers asked Staff to draft language supporting the high speed rail application to be forwarded to the full Council on its regular agenda for consideration.

Items submitted for the record

1. Draft resolution for Commuter Rail Study

REVIEW OF STREETS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING FIVE YEAR STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said in 2005, the voters of Norman approved a five year street maintenance General Obligation Bond program that will end in 2010. He said recent Quality of Life Survey results indicated 74% of those who responded would be somewhat likely or very likely to support a new street maintenance bond program as long as it did not increase property taxes. He said the maintenance of City streets and sidewalks ranked in the top three areas the City should focus on over the next two years.

Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, provided an overview of completed 2005 bond projects as well as the proposed street projects included in a possible March 2010, election to continue the maintenance program. He said approximately \$1,000,000 remains in the 2005 bond program and all of the projects have been completed. He attributes this to a good bidding environment and management of the Pavement Management System (PMS) program. He said with the Council's concurrence, Staff will move forward with a bid proposal for the remaining funds to be used for additional urban asphalt maintenance projects and provided a list of streets and construction timeline. He said these projects are a continuation of the PMS selection process and are the first obvious candidates for maintenance. Councilmember Cubberley said the streets appear to be in a concentrated area and asked if Staff anticipated criticism from citizens regarding the construction. Mr. Greg Hall, Superintendent of Streets, said one contractor would be doing the entire project and the streets would be staggered. Councilmember Kovach asked what type of notification citizens would receive and Mr. O'Leary said Staff can notify citizens collectively and added that most projects will allow for traffic access while construction is ongoing.

Mr. O'Leary said the 2010 Bond Proposal totals \$19 million to be distributed as follows:

- ❖ 55% asphalt rehabilitation and maintenance
- ❖ 30% concrete rehabilitation and maintenance
- ❖ 15% rural road rehabilitation and maintenance (reduce the current inventory of unpaved roads from 15 miles to 5 miles)
- ❖ Bicycle safety feature (i.e. grates and drainage structures) modification where applicable
- ❖ Perform necessary drainage improvements (i.e. minor storm water sewer extensions, valley gutters, and rural roadside drainage tin horns)

Councilmember Butler asked if the bicycle projects would be in conjunction with paving projects or more widespread and Mr. O'Leary responded they will be in conjunction with the paving projects and will be only minor improvements for drainage purposes.

Mr. O'Leary reviewed the selection criteria, maintenance strategies, and streets scheduled for maintenance. Councilmember Kovach had asked about the affect on speed tables on streets to be rehabilitated and Mr. O'Leary said the contractor will mill up to the table and stop, then mill the other side without removing or damaging the table. Mayor Rosenthal questioned why there were areas scheduled for maintenance where the streets were fairly new and Mr. Hall said although some streets in subdivisions are fairly new, others in the older parts of the addition need attention and would only require crack and sealing or a rejuvenating coat that could prolong the life of the street ten years. Mr. O'Leary said there are also streets in newer areas that are not performing as they should and taking care of those streets now to prolong life is the most cost effective method.

Mr. O'Leary said when maintenance is completed on a project, the entire block will be rehabilitated. He said while the entire block may not receive resurfacing treatment, it will receive other improvements such as replacement of storm drain grates, drainage improvements, etc. Mayor Rosenthal said it is also important citizens understand the City is completing connections and filling out the road system in rural east Norman.

Dr. Kyran Mish, Chair of the Bicycle Ad Hoc Committee, said Boyd Street is a popular bike route and felt this would be a good opportunity, while the street is under repair, to place a bike lane there separate from vehicle traffic. Mayor Rosenthal asked if it would be practical to place a painted line for a bike lane on Boyd and Mr. O'Leary said the Bike Committee is reviewing on-street painted bike lanes as well as shoulders for specific rural roads, which could merge with the maintenance projects. Councilmember Butler said 156th Avenue gets a lot of traffic and asked if that street was just being resurfaced or if other improvements were being done and Mr. Hall said Staff looked at the economics of installing shoulders but additional right-of-way would need to be purchased, which would increase the cost significantly. Councilmember Kovach asked whether shoulders extend the life of the road and Mr. O'Leary answered yes. Dr. Mish said roadways fail from the edges and that is why shoulders are important. Councilmember Butler suggested placing "Share the Road" signs in hilly areas, especially on Franklin Road, Robinson Street, and Lindsey Street until such time shoulders could be added. Dr. Mish suggested lowering the speed limits and enforcing them on hilly roads because of the limited site distance. Councilmember Kovach asked if there were eastern rural roads scheduled for maintenance where a bike path could be accommodated such as Alameda, which is heavily used by bicyclists. Mr. O'Leary said the Bicycle Ad Hoc Committee is reviewing options; however, Staff would have to confer with the Bond Counsel to determine whether bike paths can be legally included as part of a project in the bond proposal.

Mr. O'Leary said rural road projects are proposed as partnership projects with Cleveland County. The estimated \$2.8 million includes City labor, County labor, and materials, but the value of the rehab is closer to \$5.6 million. He said it is good leveraging of resources and the City's relationship with the County, but it assumes the relationship continues with Cleveland County. Councilmember Cubberley asked if this was in addition to funds/projects budgeted in the Capital Improvements Program for materials and labor and Mr. Hall replied yes.

Mr. O'Leary said Staff prepared additional information for streets that are in such condition, the only option is total reconstruction, which includes new curbs and gutters; new driveway approaches; stabilizing subgrade; full depth paving; and drainage improvements of ten lane miles for approximately \$10 million. Councilmember Cubberley said the last bond proposal did not have a minor road reconstruction component and the sides streets are often the ones that get ignored for years so this portion would help address concerns from those citizens that feel their streets are being pushed aside for larger projects. Councilmember Kovach said the roads that need reconstruction require more maintenance because they are being patched frequently, which increases the operations and maintenance budget and Mr. O'Leary agreed.

Mr. Francisco highlighted the property tax impact to property owners for the bond proposal as follows:

Option 1 - PROPOSED 5-YEAR STREET RESURFACING G.O. BONDS, SERIES 2010 (\$19 million)

Average Impact on Home with \$100,000 Market Value	\$3.83 per month
Average Impact on Home with \$150,000 Market Value	\$5.92
Average Impact on Home with \$200,000 Market Value	\$8.01

No Tax Increase as tax impact on households is calculated to be the same as the 2005 G.O. Bond Program.

Option 2 – PROPOSED 5-YEAR STREET RECONSTRUCTION G.O. BONDS, SERIES 2010 (\$10 million)

Average Impact on Home with \$100,000 Market Value	\$2.73 per month
Average Impact on Home with \$150,000 Market Value	\$4.22
Average Impact on Home with \$200,000 Market Value	\$5.71

Slight increase on property tax.

Option 3 – PROPOSED 20-YEAR STREET RECONSTRUCTION G.O. BONDS, SERIES 2010 (\$10 million)

Average Impact on Home with \$100,000 Market Value	\$.072 per month
Average Impact on Home with \$150,000 Market Value	\$1.11
Average Impact on Home with \$200,000 Market Value	\$1.50

Spread debt over longer period of time.

Mayor Rosenthal had reservations about requesting \$29 million in bonds. She said Council needs to be sensitive to the perceptions of voters and while she was supportive of the full Council seeing the presentation, she requested another option that would include reconstruction. She said Council needs to be cognizant of the City and State budgets during the election period. She said the entire program equals 229 miles of roadway and may be too ambitious and if the proposal is limited to \$19 million the City could still do more maintenance than was included in the 2005 election. Councilmember Cubberley said because of interest costs, the 20 year option is not a good value and asked to see the figures on a ten year bond as well as a mix. Staff will present the two packages to Council in its Study Session on November 3, 2009.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Street Maintenance Bond Program Existing (2005) and Proposed (2010)" dated October 15, 2009
2. Options for Proposed Street Maintenance and Reconstruction Bonds

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

Ms. Janice Oak, Progressive Independence, distributed information regarding an online National Dialogue by United We Ride Department of Rehabilitation Services concerning transportation access for people with disabilities, older adults, and persons of limited income to be held November 2 through 13, 2009.

Items submitted for the record

1. E-mail dated October 13, 2009, from Beverly Graham to Janice Oak

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor